

The Sun Is No Longer A Star  
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\*Thy is pronounced as Ty

“The sun isn’t as bright today,” Annie noted as she gracefully stepped around the plastic melted on the cement.

“How much longer do you think we have?” I asked while I watched Thy attempt to step around as Annie did, but tripped and dropped everything he was carrying.

“A year, a few months, a few weeks, hell maybe even til tomorrow,” Thy responded as he attempted to regain all his items.

The Sun is almost gone. It’s been, in a sense, hospice since 2054. It’s been burning out for a long time and will soon no longer be a star, but a supernova, and 8 minutes and 53 seconds following that we’ll all be dead. In 2053, the pollution levels had gotten so high that the gasses began to hide the sun, shortening the days and freezing the lands. Our government had the bright idea to try to remove some of the hydrogen from the sun to allow it to grow smaller and become stronger so it could burn the parts of the ozone layer full of perfumes and greenhouse gasses. It didn’t work. Now we’re left with this... a barren wasteland, full of killers and broken people, all looking for an escape from this life. And one more thing happened. What was left of humanity saw an opportunity to charge more for water due to it being so scarce. I’m not scared of this world. At least, I don’t think I am. I just don’t know what to *do*. I want, no, *need* to find this reservoir. Not just for us to survive, but for me to have a greater reason to continue.

“Earth to Leno...” Annie said, obviously annoyed that I wasn’t paying attention. I turned around to face her.

“Did you even hear anything I said?” Annie jabbed. “or were you not paying attention?”

“Uh... totally,” I murmured, “you were saying something about the reservoir?”

“I mean, sort of,” she replied, “I was saying that we’re almost out of water, and we’ll need to find some soon.”

“Or maybe we won’t,” Thy butted in, “maybe we’ll be dead tomorrow, you don’t know.”

“Always the one to look on the bright side,” I sighed, looking at the small amount of water we had left.

We needed to find water soon or we’d be screwed. Hopefully, we would come upon some ponds or puddles. We’ve gone long times without water but it always causes us to become hazy and delusional. We’d gotten used to our mouths being dry after those long periods without water but we still need it to survive. Annoyingly. We’ll probably stop at a market. They may have some bottles left that are hopefully cheap but most likely ridiculously expensive. We could always steal it, but Annie wants her life to be perfect and to never harm another. She’s never even killed a mosquito, always claiming that they need our blood to survive and for their families but Thy and I will always kill them despite her protests. Thy couldn’t care less about the world he lives in. He’s our age, 17, but he always acts like a 15-year-old who cares about nothing other than their next high. Annie is a perfectionist. She needs her life to go the exact way she wants or she’ll break. I think deep down she knows it won’t be but if she does, she doesn’t say anything about it. I feel as if I’m between the two. I can accept the world we live in but I wish for more. I wish for a reason to continue living and a reason to enjoy this world.

“So, where is our next stop?” Thy asked, slurping down a handful of berries that we had gathered earlier.

“I think,” Annie paused momentarily to answer his question, “probably a small market or some form of a cantina to try and find some water, but it will be expensive.”

“Exactly what I thought we would do,” I added as I snatched some of the berries from Thy and munched on them.

“Well, let’s get going,” Thy declared, eyeing me.

We kept walking for miles before coming upon a little stand that had a sign hanging that read *Water* with a little arrow pointing to a cellar door in the ground

“Should we go in?” I asked uncertainty.

“I don’t think we should,” Annie answered. “it seems like we might die if we went down there.”

“Suit yourselves, but I’m thirsty, and I’m not going to go out by dehydration or heat stroke,” Thy interjected recklessly.

He was thirsty like all of us, but he was also willing to take the risk of death for some water and that feeling of courage gave me a boost of confidence. This led to me following him down the mossy stairs into the cellar.

“Are you coming or not, Annie?” he muttered irritably.

“Okay, I’m coming,” she said, obviously afraid of what lay below us.

“We’re gonna be okay,” he said. “I promise you.”

We entered the cellar and almost immediately smelled the scent of death, adding to the fear that Annie already felt. The cellar appeared to be living quarters for someone but either they left or died some time ago. Everything down here was old — the chairs, the tables, the carpets, and even the ceiling was decaying, falling apart..

“Hello?” Annie called out shakily.

“Who are you calling out to?” Thy questioned. “everything down here is dead or about to die.”

“She’s just trying to make sure we’re alone down here,” I reckoned, “at least I hope she is.”

“I am, don’t worry,” she replied in a quiet voice.

As we continued to search around, we found some old clothes, books, and toys, but no water. I went to what appeared to have been a bathroom hoping to find medical supplies but found nothing but cobwebs and dust.

“SCORE!” Thy yelled after entering the bedroom.

“What did you find?” Annie exclaimed, suddenly bristling with anticipation.

“Beer and drugs, the two best things at the end of the world!” he yammered excitedly.

“Ugh,” Annie grumbled annoyingly, “did you find anything *useful*?”

“Just beer and drugs,” he responded. “oh, and this map!”

“*What?*” she exclaimed, her interest peaked again.

“A map that seemingly leads to a supposed reservoir!” Thy remarked.

“It was kinda just laying on the bed next to the beer and drugs, it looked like someone got drunk and high and drew it I guess,” he added.

“Nice find, Thy,” I said, “let’s leave no time to waste and get to following it.”

We left the cellar with a newfound feeling of hope that all our effort may be worth it in the end. We walked for another two miles before Thy announced for us to come to a stop.

“Thy, why are we stopping?” Annie questioned, exhausted from the walk and dehydrated.

“We’re here!” he said, overlooking the miles of land we had walked through.

“There’s nothing for miles, Thy,” I exhaled, “what do you mean, *we’re here?*”

“I mean we’re here... that’s what the map says, at least,” he murmured.

“But where—?” Annie’s sentence was cut short as Thy pointed towards something in the distance.

Far off, he could see a huge reservoir filled to the brim with drinkable water hidden by miles of land and mountains.

“We made it!” Thy cheered. “the hidden reservoir of Spring Creek, Nevada!”

“Thank god,” I cried out, tears of joy and exhaustion streaming down my face, “we finally found it!”

“We did, didn’t we?” Thy replied calmly, trying not to let his excitement show.

“This reservoir could supply a whole town for decades,” Annie exclaimed, her voice rising with excitement, “we could help so many people!”

“But do we?” Thy asked. “why should we help them when they didn’t help us?”

“Because it's the right thing to do,” Annie chastised, looking at Thy scornfully.

“When have we ever done the right thing?” Thy snapped, getting visibly angry. “We just live our lives. We don’t do anything to help others, and we don’t need to start now.”

I didn’t say anything but agreed with Thy. There was no reason to share the reservoir. We could last for decades to come and could waste as much water as we wanted. Hell, we could probably do whatever we wanted with it and never run out. But I knew how Annie was, striving to be perfect and have everyone love her. But neither I nor Thy was like that and neither of us could care less about other people.

“Well, Leno, whose side are you on?” Annie protested. Visible redness had spread across her face from both the sun and anger.

“I— I agree with Thy,” I murmured, slightly disappointed in myself for agreeing.

“You know what? Fine,” she sighed, “I’m not going to argue with the two of you. I can understand why you wouldn’t want to.”

“I’m sorry, Annie, but given the world we live in, I don’t think I can share this with others,” Thy lamented, “they would either take it for themselves or waste it all. Maybe we can share it with others someday but for now, I want to keep it for ourselves.”

“Can you not see a world without harm or anger, Thy?” she asked.

“No, I can’t,” he replied, “our society is dead! Can you not see that? This world won’t ever be perfect, so why do we act like it? We won’t be okay. Everything’s gone. The world has gone to madness. Everyone cares about themselves. You need to see that. So here’s your answer, Annie. No, I can’t, and, well... you shouldn’t either.”

Annie stood there, dumbfounded at his response. I think she realized there was truth to what he was saying. We might not be okay. We could die tomorrow, or maybe in a year. We don’t know. We never will. What we can do is make the best of it. But, we will never be okay.

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I took a long sip of water while staring over the new land. We had found it and it was ours. Annie didn’t seem pleased with our choice of keeping it hidden but it doesn’t phase me. I was happy and knew we would be set for the rest of our lives. One day, we may find another group in need of water but for now, we’ll enjoy it until the Sun is longer a star.

